(vi) Micro-finance Development Fund has been set up in NABARD with a corpus of Rs. 100 crores for scaling up the Self Help Group Linkage Programme and supporting other credit delivery models.

(vii) The scheme of micro credit through Self Help Groups is expected to cover 70 lakh families in the current year. The target for 2002-03 is raised to 1.25 lakh families.

(viii) Watershed Development Fund has been set up with a corpus of Rs. 200 crores with contribution of Rs. 100 each from NABARD and Government of India.

UNDRC assistance for natural disasters

1328. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the article captioned "blame it on the forces of nature", by Sunder K. Datta Ray, which appeared in the Business Standard, New Delhi dated 28th July, 2001;

(b) if so, whether India heads the list of countries, alongwith China, Hongkong and Phillipines, which are vulnerable to natural disasters;

(c) whether India has ever made a request to the United Nations Disaster Relief Co-ordination (UNDRC) for assistance; and

(d) if not, whether Government are thinking to make such a request now, looking to the present flood disaster in Orissa, a calamity-prone State in the country?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) India, due to its geographical location and climate is vulnerable to various natural disasters like flood, cyclone, drought, earthquake, landslides, hailstorm and avalanches.

(c) and (d) No, Sir.

Drought relief to H.P.

1329. SHRIMATI CHANDRESH KUMARI: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the total amount provided to Himachal Pradesh as drought relief during the last three financial years;

(b) the total amount utilized by the State against the allocated amount, year-wise; and

(c) the total amount laying unutilised against the released amount during each of those years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Entire Central share of Calamity Relief Fund (CRF) for 1998-99 amounting to Rs. 22.42 crore, for 1999-2000 amounting to Rs. 23.37 crore and for 2000-01 amounting to Rs. 32.61 crore was released to Himachal Pradesh for undertaking necessary measures in the wake of natural calamities including drought. In addition, Rs. 18.98 crore was released to the State from the national Calamity Contingency Fund for the drought of 2000-01.

(b) and (c) The State Government have reported expenditure of Rs. 33.58 crore during 1999-2000, Rs. 55.10 crore during 2000-01 and Rs. 82.14 crore during 2001-02 on flood/drought and that no unspent balance is available.

Dry cropping pattern for Kutch in Gujarat

1330. SHRI ANANTRAY DEVSHANKER DAVE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that a large area of agricultural land in Kutch district of Gujarat remains uncultivated, because of recurring droughts;

(b) whether Government have prepared any action-plan to develop dry cropping pattern and herbal and medicinal plants *viz.* Allovira, Gokhru, Sonamukhi, etc. in Kutch district;

(c) if so, the details thereof; and

(d) if not, in what manner Government propose to protect the interests of farmers in that district?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HUKUMDEO NARAYAN YADAV): (a) Yes, Sir. The district falls in arid and semi-arid tropics and cultivation is done in rainfed conditions. The farmers have to face drought periodically.

(b) to (d) So far as herbal and medicinal plants *viz.* Allovira, Gokhru, Sonamukhi, etc. in Kutch district are concerned, a scheme for medicinal and aromatic plants is implemented by providing planting materials/seeds with the